

Today's agenda

Family Independence Program (FIP)

Rite Care Health Insurance

Child Care Assistance Program

How to help your clients



The Family Independence Program

- ❑ Cash assistance and work readiness services
- ❑ Parents have 60 month lifetime limit
- ❑ Parents must have an employment plan unless exempt (e.g., child under one, disability, domestic violence)
- ❑ Youngest child under age 6: 20 hrs activity
Child 6 or over: 30 hours of activity



The Family Independence Program Employment Plan Activities

- ❑ Broad range of activities during first 24 months of plan including adult basic ed, ESOL, post-secondary education and training
- ❑ After 24th month, generally parent must be working
- ❑ Housing search can count alone or in a combination with other activities for up to 180 days if the family is homeless or in immediate danger of homelessness
- ❑ Up to 10 hours of activities required in a DCYF Service Plan can be counted as part of the required hours

The Family Independence Program

Changes this past year...

- 20/10: Work + education/training
- Plan as condition of eligibility
- Full family sanction at 6 months
- Counting benefits from other states
- Two parent families
- Job search





A Good Change: The 20/10 Rule

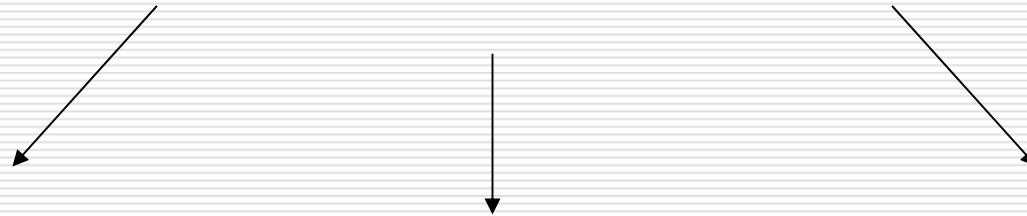
- ❑ Single parents working at least 20 hours per week can participate in 10 hours of work-related education/training to meet 30 hour work requirement
 - ❑ Option is now available after the 24th month
 - ❑ Option is not available to 2 parent families unless one parent is working at least 35 hours/week (30 hours must be in employment)
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Plan as Condition of Eligibility

- ❑ Applicants must sign an employment plan before receiving a payment (or establish an exemption)
- ❑ Benefits available 30 days from the date of application
- ❑ Parents with exemptions need to provide documentation (e.g. form filled out by doctor)
 - you can help clients gather documents

Plan as Condition of Eligibility

Client meets with screener, completes application, and makes appt for client to...

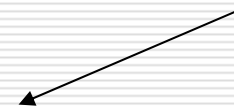


Meet eligibility tech

TABE* test

(unless working 30 hrs or
test within last year)

Social worker for
employment plan



Benefits start and employment plan begins

*Test for Adult Basic Education

Plan as Condition of Eligibility

- ❑ At recertification, need a plan signed before cash payment is given
- ❑ When families apply (or recertify) for FIP they are also applying for Rite Care and Food Stamps
- ❑ Important for family to complete the application process even if decide they don't want to continue FIP application or renew FIP so can get Food Stamps, Rite Care and Child Care Subsidy



Sanctions

- ❑ Sanction is applied if parent fails without good cause to develop and carry out employment plan.
- ❑ During first 6 months (whether or not consecutive) check is reduced by parent's share
- ❑ After 6 months of non-compliance entire case is closed - "Full family sanction" - even children lose eligibility



Sanction - Good Cause

Acceptable reasons for missing work plan activities:

- Lack of child care or care for an incapacitated individual living in the home
- Lack of transportation
- Family or household crisis or change in circumstances such as death in family or housing crisis
- Illness of parent or another family member
- Court required appearance



Sanctions – Good Cause

- ❑ Inform service provider or social case worker in advance of need to miss activity or as soon as possible after activity is missed
 - ❑ If change in family circumstance makes parent exempt (e.g. due to disability) – inform social case worker immediately
 - ❑ Parent should never just stop going to activity
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"Curing" Sanctions

- ❑ First 6 months: - Parent must participate in activity for 2 weeks or show they are exempt
- ❑ Full family sanction - parent must reapply for FIP, sign an employment plan and participate in activity for 2 weeks. Benefits do not start until the month after the month in which parent completes two weeks.
- ❑ If parent reaches time limit **and** full family sanction at same time, the family is no longer eligible for cash (including kids) and cannot come back on FIP



Counting Benefits from Other States



- Any month that the parent (as an adult) received “family cash assistance” from another state counts towards the parent’s 60 month time limit on FIP
 - Applies to both applicants and recipients at recertification
 - DHS will ask the parent and then verify by sending request for information to the state(s)
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Counting Benefits from Other States



- Benefits start while verification is pending
 - Does not affect the types of activities allowed under the employment plan
 - Months client “exempt” in other states still counts
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Two Parent Families

- ❑ At least one parent in all two-parent families must be engaged in work-related activities at least 35 hours/week
- ❑ 30 hours must be in work
- ❑ Second parent can choose not to have activities, but 60 month “clock” still “ticks”
- ❑ Previously, if one parent was disabled the other parent was allowed to engage in the full range of activities available to single-parent families

Job Search

- ❑ Supervised individual or group job search or participation in a rapid job placement program is added to the list of approved employment plan activities
- ❑ Participation may not exceed 4 consecutive weeks or 6 weeks total in a 12 month period





and Medical Assistance State Law Changes

Rite Care provides comprehensive health insurance to pregnant women, children and parents with low-modest income

Families with income above 150% pay monthly premium

Parents eligible up to 185% FPL
(e.g. \$30,710/year family of 3)

Children/Pregnant women eligible up to 250% FPL
(e.g. \$41,500/year family of 3)



and Medical Assistance State Law Changes

- ❑ Resource test: \$10,000 in liquid assets (not implemented)

 - ❑ Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA): Families closing to FIP cash assistance (and other low-wage families) will receive only 12 months of TMA instead of 18 months (during the TMA period the family does not pay a monthly premium)

 - ❑ Non-citizen children: Many non-citizen children ineligible for Rite Care after 1/7/2007 **unless** they received benefits at some time on or before 12/31/2006
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and Non-citizen children

Children on the program as of 12/31/06 will stay on and eligibility for new applicants is summarized below:

	<u>Until 12/31/06</u>	<u>Beginning 1/1/07</u>
Legal Permanent Resident (green card)	Eligible	Not eligible <u>unless</u> received RIte Care at anytime on/before 12/31/06 <u>or</u> in US for 5 yrs
Other Legally Present (e.g., deferred enforced departure-Liberians)	Eligible	Not eligible <u>unless</u> received RIte Care at anytime on/before 12/31/06
Undocumented	Eligible	Not eligible <u>unless</u> received RIte Care at any time on/before 12/31/06
Refugee/granted asylum	Eligible	Eligible



and Non-Citizen Children

COUNTDOWN to enroll all kids by 12/31/06

- Ask every family if kids have health insurance and encourage to APPLY!
 - Refer to Family Resource Counselors for assistance in applying 274-1771 x207
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and Non Citizen Adults

- DHS is expected to change rules to deny Rite Care parents who are legal permanent residents unless they have lived in the US for at least five years
 - Rite Care is still available to all pregnant women who meet program rules (e.g., income) regardless of citizen and immigration status
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U.S. Citizens and Medical Assistance

- ❑ U.S. citizens will need to prove citizenship and identity as part of the Medicaid/Rite Care application process beginning Nov. 1, 2006
- ❑ Recipients must prove citizenship/identity at recertification beginning February 2007
- ❑ People who receive SSI or Medicare coverage DO NOT need to prove citizenship identity

U.S. Citizens and Medical Assistance

Proof of citizenship and identity...

- ❑ Passport or certificate of naturalization proves **both** citizenship and identity. If not available then...
 - ❑ Citizenship: Birth certificate, birth record
(Other documents may be presented if BC not available)
 - ❑ Identity: Driver's license with photo ID
 - State issued ID
 - School ID with photo
 - Tribal ID card
 - For children under 16 – parent's signature on application
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U.S. Citizens and Medical Assistance

DHS will use documents in other records – FIP, Food Stamps, Child Care. Generally BC available, but not ID

Documents can be submitted through authorized representative – including Family Resource Counselors, agencies that provide services to Medicaid recipients (as approved by DHS)

Head Start, Child Care Centers, CAPs can help recipients gather documents and transmit to DHS.



U.S. Citizens and Medical Assistance

Challenges for gathering documents:

- Out of state birth certificates
- People (age 16+) who do not have a license or school ID with photo and need to get a state ID
- Cost of obtaining proof
 - RI Birth Certificates \$15
 - RI State ID \$15

Poverty Institute website www.povertyinstitute.org will have info posted soon on how to get birth certificates and state ID



Child Care Assistance

- ❑ Helps pay for child care at center, family provider or by approved provider in home
 - ❑ Parent must be working at least 20 hours/week
 - ❑ Income Limits
 - Family of 2 \$29,700/year
 - Family of 3 \$37,356/year
 - ❑ Co-pay is a percentage of income ranging from 1 – 15% of gross pay
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Child Care Assistance



- ❑ In June, co-payments for families with income above 150% FPL increased by 2 % (from 6% to 8%) of family's gross income but legislature **reduced** the co-pay increase to 1% (from 8% to 7%) (see chart)
 - ❑ Resource limit of \$10,000 in liquid assets (bank accounts, money market accounts). Educational savings and retirement accounts are excluded.
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Child Care Assistance



Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement

- Parent must provide information about non-custodial parent of ALL children in family whether or not receiving child care assistance.
 - Parent must cooperate in obtaining a child support order(s) unless doing so would cause parent or child physical or emotional harm (parent is referred to Family Violence Advocate).
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Ways to help your client...Part 1

Problem-solving

- ❑ Problem solve with DHS Worker (need a release)
 - ❑ Move up the chain of command (supervisor – regional manager)
 - ❑ Review notices – pay attention to dates re: requesting hearings
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Ways to help your client...Part 1

Clients Right to Notice and Hearings

- ❑ DHS provides written decision prior to reducing or terminating benefits
 - ❑ Right to fair hearing. File a written request within 30 days of date on the notice
 - ❑ If requested within 10 days-benefits pending hearing. If lose, must repay cash assistance – but not child care or Rite Care
 - ❑ RI Legal Services for Assistance
(Providence 274-2652; Newport 846-2264)
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Ways to help your client...Part 2

- ❑ Each year state must balance its budget
- ❑ Budgets are a matter of priorities; a blueprint for how we decide to spend the state's revenue
- ❑ You can make a difference

Ways to help your client...Part 2

- Track problems that arise because of changes to programs and share concerns/patterns that arise
- Get involved in advocacy
 - Work with One RI Coalition to promote legislation - restore kids and parents to Rite Care, make FIP better, increase Earned Income Tax Credit, etc.
 - Help clients tell their stories, meet with state reps and share concerns, write letters to state reps, testify at State House, set up parent presentations around advocacy